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HOUSING NEWS

 KEEPING HOUSING ISSUES IN THE FOREFRONT 

2006 HUD FUNDING

You Say “Continua,” I Say “Continuums”—Let’s Call the Whole Thing Off!

Okay, just kidding about calling the whole thing off; but by the time the Continuum of Care annual funding process is completed, it’s easy to imagine that a lot of people feel that way. Springtime is well past, and to those of you who work with HUD-funded housing projects, that means you probably completed one of the busiest times of your year back in June. Applications for HUD’s Continuum of Care funding were due on June 10, 2005, and all over the state of Missouri, dedicated representatives of nine Continua of Care spent long hours getting their competitive funding application packages together.

For 2006, Missouri’s pro-rata share of HUD’s Supportive Housing funds was approximately \$20,000,000. Nine Continua sent in application packages vying for those funds for dozens of projects, including many new permanent supportive housing projects, renewal of existing transitional and permanent housing projects and Shelter Plus Care grants, and several HMIS-related applications. A quick virtual tour of the state shows what’s at stake:

Kansas City CoC: The Homeless Services Coalition of Greater Kansas City submitted an application to renew twenty existing grants supporting both permanent and transitional housing programs, and one new program, a Shelter Plus Care grant to be administered by Truman Behavioral Health. The total request of nearly \$6 million includes more than \$2 million to fund the renewal of three existing Shelter Plus Care grants operated in the Kansas City and Independence areas by the Department of Mental Health, as well as funds to assist the operation of MAACLink, the HMIS for the Kansas City Continuum. The programs applying to be renewed include Sheffield Place, SAVE, Inc., Rose Brooks, Salvation Army, and Benilde Hall.

Northland (Platte and Clay Counties) CoC: The Clay/Platte Continuum of Care applied for \$112,068, with Catholic Charities as the sponsor, for a three-year grant to do “scattered site” transitional housing. The grant covers leasing costs of the market rate apartments, case management and some supportive services (e.g.,



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transportation). The grant will assist a total of six families in three years, each participating for eighteen months.

St. Joseph CoC: The St. Joseph Continuum, which covers Buchanan County, submitted an application to fund HMIS activities, including purchase of computers and other related hardware.

Boone County CoC: The Columbia-Boone County Basic Needs Coalition applied to renew two supportive housing programs: the Salvation Army's Hope House (at \$71,334), and Phoenix Programs' Project Bridge (at \$71,122). The application also included a renewal of a \$282,396 Shelter Plus Care grant for the Continuum administered by the Columbia Housing Authority.

City of St. Louis CoC: St. Louis submitted a package of 17 applications that included five new projects and 12 renewals. The five new projects included a safe haven, three projects devoted to chronic homelessness, and one project for disabled homeless.

County of St. Louis: St. Louis County submitted an application for one project to lease 22 units of permanent housing for homeless individuals and families; three of the units are reserved for chronically homeless individuals.

Springfield CoC: This Continuum, covering all of Greene, Webster and Christian Counties, applied to renew four existing projects: three SHP

transitional housing projects operated by the Salvation Army, Ozarks Area Community Action Corporation (OACAC), and The Kitchen; and one Shelter + Care grant operated by the Springfield Housing Authority.

Joplin CoC: The Joplin Continuum is comprised of Jasper and Newton Counties, and submitted four transitional housing projects to be renewed: Lafayette House, the Salvation Army, and two projects under the Economic Security Corporation of the Southwest Area, the region's Community Action agency.



Balance of State Continuum: the Governor's Committee to End Homelessness oversees the Continuum application process for the balance of the State of Missouri—all those counties not included in the urban entitlement areas. Seven new projects were submitted by the Committee—five permanent housing and two transitional housing, including SEMO Christian Restoration Center in Poplar Bluff; Delta Area Economic Opportunity Corporation (DAEOC), headquartered in Portageville; Hope Haven of Cass County; and Ripley County Family Resource Center. Also included were renewals of three Shelter Plus Care grants administered by the Department of Mental Health, and renewal of the Missouri Association for Social

Welfare (MASW) grant to operate the Homeless Missourians Information System (HMIS) for the Balance of State.

Applicants can expect to be notified of the funding results some time after Christmas 2005 (we know from experience, however, that the date is never certain). Although we know luck isn't exactly a big factor in this process, the DMH Housing Staff wish all the Continua (or Continuums) and the individual applicants the best of luck in obtaining the funds they need!



Housing Now Has a Higher Profile at DMH Web Site

The Housing Team web site has been moved to a new location within the Department of Mental Health's web site. We're happy with our new home because not only does it make us easier to find, it also makes the issue of housing more central to all of the populations served by the Department.

Please pay us a call at www.dmh.mo.gov/ada/housing/housingindex.htm or visit the DMH web portal at www.dmh.mo.gov/index.htm, click on "Consumer Supports" and then on "Housing".



MISSOURI'S GUIDE TO HOUSING ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

The success of our Housing Guide is fabulous! Another 25,000 are getting printed and 5,000 of those will be in Spanish!




The housing guide includes valuable information about eligibility and how to apply for the various housing programs, agency listings and contacts, and a useful glossary of housing terms. Housing programs described in the booklet relate to rental assistance, home purchasing, home repair/weatherization assistance, home access modifications, and information on the Missouri Property Tax Credit.

The Guide can now be viewed on-line at any of the following websites:

www.gcd.oa.mo.gov

www.dmh.mo.gov/ada/housing/housingindex.htm#MOGuideHousingAssistance

www.dhss.mo.gov/Seniorservices/index.html

If you need further information or have any questions, please contact us at 573-751-9206. 

REDUCING ENERGY COSTS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR!

For almost every American, paying a utilities bill is second only in cost to paying rent or a house payment. Families with average incomes typically pay about 6% of their monthly income for energy; but low-income households face a much bigger burden when it comes to paying for energy. In 2002, such households spent, on average, nearly 13% of their household incomes on energy costs (U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, Executive Summary: "LIHEAP Home Energy Notebook for FY 2002" (April 2004)--defining "low income" as households at 150% or less of the federal poverty guidelines).

The cost of energy is acknowledged by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to be a contributing factor in causing homelessness (www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/energyenviron/index.cfm). So what can you do to help reduce energy costs? Actually, you can do quite a bit!

We've done some research and come up with a number of cost-free ways for renters to reduce energy consumption and thus reduce some of the energy cost burden in lower income households. These ideas come from the U.S. Department of Energy web site www.eere.energy.gov/consumerinfo/tips/renters.html and from



www.fypower.org ("Flex Your Power"). Both web sites have lots of good energy-saving information for both renters and home-owners.

Winter Heating

- During each 24-hour period, you will save about 3% on your heating bill for every 1° that you lower the thermostat setting. For example, if you normally keep your thermostat set at 75°F all the time, and you lower it by 3° to 72°F, you will save about 9% (3° x 3%) on your heating bill. In other words, you will save about 9 cents for every dollar you spend on heating costs. On a \$75.00 bill, you could save \$6.75.

- For the 8-hour period at night when you're sleeping, you will save an extra 1% on your heating bill for every 1° that you set back the thermostat. For example, if you lower your thermostat from 72°F to 65°F at night, you will save another 7 cents for every heating dollar you spend.

- If you have a fireplace, keep the damper closed when the fireplace is not in use (have your landlord or property manager close the damper if you need help). Closing the damper prevents up to 8% of furnace-heated air from going up the chimney. If the fireplace is never used, ask your



landlord or property manager to seal the damper with weather-stripping and stuff the chimney with fiberglass insulation (remove this material from the chimney before a fire is lit in the fireplace).

- If you feel there is a problem with the furnace and you can't stay warm, **do not use**

the stove for additional heat—it is dangerous.

Contact the building manager or property manager; there may be a problem with the furnace or boiler.

- Do not open your windows if it gets too hot in your apartment; turn down your thermostat instead. Opening windows wastes energy and money. When you open a window, you lose heat you already paid for. Plus, the furnace will pump out even more heat until the window is closed or the thermostat is turned down.

- Close drapes, blinds and shades to help retain heat at night or during unoccupied periods.

- If you have ceiling fans, in the winter reverse the fan's motor so that the blades push air up toward the ceiling, where hot air normally rises. The fan will drive the warm air back down around the edges of the room, which can result in



more even heating. Better heat circulation will help combat the problem of sweating windows that some homes experience in the wintertime because of condensation on the glass.

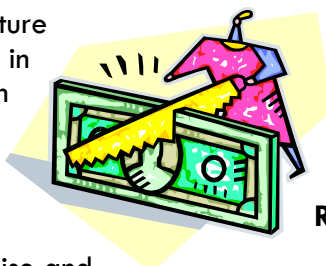
- People generate heat. If you have a group of people in your apartment, let the heat they

give off help keep your apartment warm. Turn down your thermostat and save some money. Turn the thermostat back up when they leave.

Summer Cooling

- Set the thermostat as high as comfortably possible in the summer. The less difference between the indoor and outdoor temperatures, the lower the overall cooling bill will be. Between 1% and 2% of summer cooling costs can be saved for every degree Fahrenheit the thermostat is raised.

- Set the temperature at 85° or higher in the summer when your home is unoccupied. A programmable thermostat can automatically raise and lower the temperature according to your needs; ask your apartment manager to install one of these inexpensive devices.



- Check the settings on air conditioner units in your apartment. Make sure the "fresh air" vent on the air conditioner is closed so you are not cooling outside air.

- Close drapes, blinds and shades to keep sun's rays out of the home during hot summer days.

Lighting

- Make sure you are getting the best possible light by cleaning fixtures twice a year.
- Disconnect or remove lamps in multiple lamp fixtures. Use task lighting where needed—use light where you need it rather than lighting a whole room.
- Open blinds and shades. Turn off lights in unoccupied areas or in spaces with sufficient natural lighting.
- Turn off the lights when not needed. It is a myth that leaving them on uses less energy than turning them on and off.

- Turn off lights not necessary for security and safety.

Refrigerator

- Adjust the refrigerator temperature settings. Optimum refrigerator range is 37 to 40°F and freezer range is 0 to 5°F. If the temperature control system does not specify degrees, ask your property manager or landlord to check the



appliance's manual for corresponding settings and make these changes for you.

- Minimize door openings as much as possible. Every time the refrigerator door is opened, cooled air escapes. The unit must then work harder to replace the air. Try to keep the door open no longer than necessary. Be sure to close the door completely.



- Allow hot foods to cool before placing them in the refrigerator. Hot food decreases the temperature in the refrigerator temporarily, forcing the refrigerator to work harder to keep the air cool.
- Turn on your refrigerator's "energy saver" switch. In damp environments make sure that excess condensation does not form on the inside of the unit. If condensation forms, turn the energy saver switch off.
- Keep the refrigerator full. A full refrigerator retains cold better than an empty one. If the refrigerator is nearly empty, store water-filled containers inside. The mass of cold items will enable the refrigerator to recover more quickly after the door has been opened. On the other hand, don't overfill it, since that will interfere with the circulation of cold air inside.

- Regularly defrost manual-defrost models. Frost buildup increases the amount of energy needed to keep the motor running.

Water Heating

If you rent a house or duplex, your unit probably has its own water heater, and the following tips will be helpful. If you rent an apartment in a complex, you may not have your own water heater and these tips will not apply.

- If you leave home for an extended period, such as a vacation, turn the water heater down. There's no reason to reheat the same water over and over again if you're not going to use it.
- If you've been comfortable with the water temperature at the current setting, try lowering it. A temperature of 115° provides comfortable hot water for most uses. However, if you have a dishwasher, check the owner's manual first to see what water temperature is required to clean dishes.
- If the door to the closet that houses your hot water heater have louvers or grills, do not cover or set anything in front of them.
- Notify the building manager or property manager if any of your faucets leak. One drip can waste up to 48 gallons of water a week. If

it's a hot water faucet that's leaking, you're literally sending your energy dollars down the drain.

Cooking

- Cook during temperate hours. Avoid preparing meals that require you to use the range or oven extensively on hot days. This helps to reduce the load on your air conditioner and makes you feel more comfortable in your home.
- Cook with a full oven. Prepare dishes together when possible. If you have three dishes to be cooked in the oven at slightly different temperatures (325°F, 350°F and 375°F, for example), pick the average temperature (350°F in this case) to cook all three.
- Don't peek. Every time you open the oven door to look at the food, the oven temperature is lowered by 25°F to 75°F. Use a timer if the oven door does not have a window.
- Use cooking time wisely. Turn off the electric range two to three minutes before the task is done and allow the residual heat to finish the job.
- Use leftover heat as a food warmer. Turn off oven immediately when finished cooking. Ovens retain heat for up to 30 minutes after they have been turned off.



- Use the self-cleaning oven feature only when necessary. Start the self-cleaning cycle immediately after the oven has been used to take advantage of preexisting heat.
- Use microwave ovens to save energy. Microwave ovens are about 33% more efficient than convection ovens and 66% more efficient than conventional ovens.
- Use pots and pans that fit the burners. Pans that fit a burner absorb more of the energy, reducing the amount of heat that is lost.
- Keep oven and burners clean and kitchen ventilated. A clean oven uses energy more efficiently.
- Use the broiler when possible. The broiler uses less energy, and preheating is not required.



The DMH Housing Team hopes these tips and ideas will help our readers. Individually, many of these recommendations will have only a small effect, but taken together, you may be able to significantly lower your

energy bill and thus keep your housing situation more stable. 🏠



MASW's Tom Gould addresses the audience at a Regional Housing Meeting in Kirksville in January 2005.

REGIONAL HOUSING MEETING RESOURCE BOOK

We are finishing up the summer round of Regional Housing Meetings. During this round of meetings and also in the fall we are distributing the Regional Housing Meeting Resource Book. Be sure and get one!

The purpose of this book is to provide helpful information to organizations on housing programs so the Technical Advisor at each training meeting can further assist participants with other housing related information and planning for each region. We also want to make sure that the standard information is consistent. There are concerns that when we give the same information repeatedly it may not be consistent from time to time or place to place.

The Resource Book answers questions such as, "What is a Continuum of Care?", "What is

HUD's Supportive Housing Program?", and "What are the Missouri Housing Trust Fund,

CDBG, and Federal Home Loan Bank?" In the back of the booklet is a list of projects that have been funded along with a glossary of housing terms. We will continue to hand out new information at meetings. We ask that you share your booklet with other staff that attend the Regional Housing Meetings and bring it with you to the meetings. Our goal is for it to be a tool you use and not another handout that goes on the shelf!

If you haven't already obtained a Regional Housing Meeting Resource Book, please call 573-751-9206 to arrange to receive one. 🏠

"Y'ALL COME" HUD CONFERENCE

The Kansas City Office of Community Planning and Development for HUD held their annual best practices "Y'all Come" conference in St. Joseph in June. Staffs from all the entitlement cities in the region are invited to this conference,



and this year there were approximately 120 people in attendance. DMH Housing staff attended this excellent conference.


The City of St. Joseph's Community Development Department hosted this year's conference. Tours were also provided of HUD funded projects in the city. It was heartening to see the incredible work being accomplished in St. Joe, from the rehab along Frederick Street to the historic homes on Museum Hill.

The "Best Practices" Awards are presented during the evening banquet to projects that have been nominated as outstanding in various communities. Pictured



here is Andy Papen, Director of the Missouri Community Development Block Grant funding program. Andy works for the Department of Economic Development. His department received this award for Downtown Revitalization completed by the city of Ozark, and out of the six awards presented was the coveted "Best of the Best." Congratulations, DED!

This event is a great opportunity to network with our counterparts


in Missouri and Kansas, as well as share ideas and hear about other exceptional projects being completed. We are already looking forward to next year's conference! 

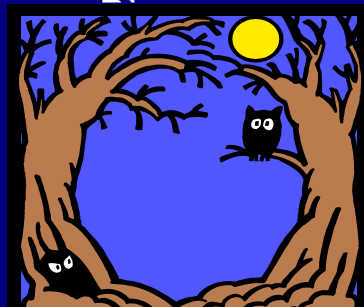
ELECTRONIC PROCESSING

We hope we've lessened the stress on our processing centers by finally getting on the ball and figuring out how they can submit invoices electronically and still be HIPAA-compliant. They had it figured out right away but I admit, it took us a while.

So, no more being told:

- "Sorry, you can't fax it."
- "Sorry, you can't e-mail it! It contains client names!"
- "Sorry, you won't be paid if it isn't here on time."
- "Sorry, the snail mail got it here too late for this month!"

Starting this month, we will accept invoices electronically with password protection on protected personal information. And we're even supplying the password! For more information, call 573-751-9206. 



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www.dmh.mo.gov/ada/housing/housingindex.htm

